

Atty Dkt No.: 1998P07977US03
Serial No.: 09/218,783

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 27 remain in the application and stand rejected. Claims 1, 9, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 22 are amended. Although this Amendment is being timely filed, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required for this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-2197.

Amendments to claims 1, 9 and 12 are to better recite the invention and are supported by the specification as filed and by claims 15 – 27. Amendments to Claims 15, 18 and 22 are formal in nature. The amendment to claim 16 is supported by Figures 6 and 7 with corresponding description in the specification on page 10, line 23 – page 14, line 24. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1 – 27 are rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,229,888 to Miloslavsky. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Miloslavsky teaches “an architecture and a system for routing calls in call centers.” Col. 2, lines 5 – 6, and see, col. 3, lines 12 – 13. “In a call center, a large number of agents handle telephone communication with callers.” Col. 1, lines 27 – 29. Incoming calls are matched with and routed “to an agent who can best handle the call based on predefined criteria (e.g., language skill, knowledge of products the caller bought, etc.)” *Id.*, lines 37 – 43. For the Miloslavsky call center, each of a number of “ports 112-113 is connected to telephones 116-117, respectively. Agents are assigned to handle these telephones.” Col. 3, lines 42 – 44. A “routing server retrieves information regarding the call (e.g., previous ordering information originated from the phone placing the call) from a database and the status of agents from the stat-server. If the best available agent to handle the call is located in a second call center, the routing server” has the call forwarded to the agent at the second call center. Col. 2, lines 42 – 56. Thus, from among the available agents, one is identified as having the best credentials for the caller, and so, is the best available agent. *See, e.g.*, col. 7, line 17 – col. 8, line 9. The “routing server 192 ... (i) cause[s] the call to be routed to an appropriate DN associated with the selected agent and (ii)

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route[s] relevant customer information from database 194 about this call to a workstation associated with the selected agent." Col. 8, lines 11 – 15. Although the method for routing the incoming call to a designated (to the selected agent's) telephone is described at col. 8, lines 17 – 40, Miloslavsky says nothing about what happens if the routed call goes unanswered, if the designated line is busy, or if the agent has set the do-not-call feature for the station. Such an occurrence would be handled by group pick up system.

As has been previously noted, the present invention relates to an improved supplementary service for telephone system users, a group pickup service. The group pickup service allows group members to answer or pickup telephone calls to one member station from their member station or telephone. Thus, members can answer calls that are intended for or ringing at another, different member telephone or station that is designated for the same group. The member stations of a group may be associated with local and remote servers. Thus, as recited in claim 15, the request unit enables "operation of the group pickup system when there is an unanswered call at a member station;" the connect unit forwards the unanswered call to other group member stations; and the call establishing unit establishes the "connection between the calling station and a selected call pickup station," See, also, claims 1, 9, 12, 22, and 27. Furthermore, the pickup can be initiated manually by another member at a member station, or automatically, by the system searching for another member. See, e.g., claim 1, lines 8 – 9, and claim 16.

Thus, while Miloslavsky teaches a call center that identifies agents with incoming calls and routes each call to the identified agent, that is not recited by claims 1 – 27. In particular, Miloslavsky fails to teach, and certainly does not suggest, a system or method, where members (Miloslavsky's agents) pickup calls routed to an identified best available agent. Therefore, Miloslavsky does not teach or suggest the present invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 9, 12, 15, 22, and 27 over Miloslavsky under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully solicited.

Furthermore, because dependent claims include all of the differences with the references as the claims from which they depend, Miloslavsky does not teach or suggest the present invention as recited in claims 2 – 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16 – 21 and 23 – 26, which depend from

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claims 1, 9, 12, 15 and 22, respectively. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2 – 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16 – 21 and 23 – 26, under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is respectfully solicited.

The applicants have considered the other references cited but not relied upon and find them to be no more relevant than the references upon which the Examiner relied for the rejection.

The applicants thank the Examiner for efforts, both past and present, in examining the application. Believing the application to be in condition for allowance, both for the amendment to the claims and for the reasons set forth above, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1 – 27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and allow the application to issue.


Should the Examiner believe anything further may be required, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below for a telephonic or personal interview to discuss any other changes.

Respectfully submitted,

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(Date)

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